

HIGHLIGHTS

of the

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:
“AN EXPERIMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS OF FOLK MEDIA AND
SELECTED METHODS OF AWARENESS CREATION
FOR PROMOTION OF COMMUNAL HARMONY
IN THE CITY OF BARODA”

by

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INTRODUCTION

The study was aimed at studying the effectiveness of folk media in promoting messages of communal harmony. Against the backdrop of post 2002 disturbance in Gujarat, it was in the fitness of things to conduct a research on the “Effectiveness of Folk Media and Selected Methods of Awareness Creation for Promotion of Communal Harmony in the city of Baroda”. The study threw light on some very interesting facts and behavior patterns. The city of Baroda has a mixed population, where people of different religions live together in harmony and have set records of helping, serving and saving each other.

It was envisaged that only through education the seeds of respect, tolerance, faith and harmony could be sown. Therefore, it was decided to try out promoting communal

harmony through educational efforts in the form of folk media and research project was conceived with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To develop folk media on selected messages on communal harmony and study its effectiveness, i. e., in educating people about communal harmony.
- 2) To study the differences in the effectiveness of folk media in educating people about communal harmony in relation to their age, levels of living (income), literacy level, religion and exposure to media.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology consisted of:

- (i) Selection of population and sample of 900 females from the six slums of Baroda, which were reported communally sensitive. These slums are: Navapura, Ramniklal Ni Chal, Kamatipura, Sanjaynagar, Patra Ni Chal and Pension Pura.
- (ii) Selection of strategy consisting of drama, street play, campaigns, posters, charts and human puppets and *Bhavi* (a folk drama of Gujarat which depicts social life of people).
- (i) Preparation of content of what is communal harmony, reasons for disharmony, role of government, NGOs, media in enhancing communal harmony.
- (ii) Development of the selected media by treating the content as scripts, slogans, visuals and so on and validation of scripts by experts.
- (iii) Preparation of research tools – knowledge test, check list for measuring exposure to media; and reaction scale to measure reactions of women towards learning through the strategy.
- (iv) Preparation of accessories, backdrops and visuals for stage shows, campaigns and rallies and validation of the research tools.
- (v) To begin with a pre-test, then conducting the experiment in the selected six communities by performing all the six folk media along with rallies and campaigns. A post-test was also conducted in the end.

- (vi) Collection of qualitative data by organising focus group discussions in all the age group of the respondents in the selected communities.

FINDINGS

- (1) Despite the fact that 2/3 rd of the respondents represented low-income group, mostly with low literacy levels with large family size, their exposure to folk media was high (88 %).
- (2) A majority liked the *Bhavi* followed by drama and other media. A majority liked selected folk media as they liked story and characters.
- (3) Differences in pre and post test scores showed gain in knowledge of messages on communal harmony irrespective of age, difference of communities and income groups as well as their literacy levels.
- (4) The findings confirmed that the strategy was effective in communicating messages of communal harmony through folk media in the selected communities of Baroda.

IMPLICATIONS

The study highlighted that well planned tailor-made strategies, if used for imparting non-formal education to the groups or masses, can lead to gain in knowledge of new concepts, or reinforce the important messages. Therefore, the non-formal educators, development professionals or communicators should be encouraged to develop and try out media for development related messages and communal harmony in particular in the context of the present study. It also implies that folk media, which is at grass root level, and with which people are familiar, must be used as novel method or with innovations and modifications keeping in mind the characteristics of the target groups. Another important implication of the study is that use of novel and tailor made strategies increases the participation of target group in the development programmes.